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Boston, Oct. 11, 1873.

Dear Mr. Potter:

I am not to be in New York next week, and therefore shall not be able to attend the Convention of the Free Religious Association at that time; but accept my thanks for your letter, inviting me to be present, and to participate in the proceedings.

Be assured, I clearly see the importance of a manly assertion of the rights of free thought, free inquiry, and free speech, as against religious intolerance, theological dogmatism, ecclesiastical authority, Papal and Protestant infallibility. From the standpoint of the Roman Church, there can be no question

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that she is logically consistent in branding as heretics those who insist upon doing their own thinking, taking nothing credulously upon trust, proving all things, acting in accordance with their highest convictions of duty, and maintaining their individuality and independence in pursuit of religious truth.

But how there can be any heretics among Protestants, in consequence of any dissimilarity of views, my vision is too dull to perceive. On Protestant ground I recognize but one heresy; and that is, denouncing as heretical those who do not adopt our opinions. Where all are fallible, assumed infallibility is an impertinence. Among equals there is no superior. He must go back

to Rome, or make no limits to
Loyal dissent. Such dissent is
all too rare among us, because
it is a Cross to be borne, not an
easy and respectable conformity;
and in proportion as it is treated
as dangerous, or stigmatized as
irreverent, is the evidence of
prevailing cowardice and religious
degeneracy. I hail it as a
good omen whenever and
wherever it makes its appearance.

There is but one reliable
standard of judgment, and that
is <u>character</u>, not religious pro-
fession: —

"For modes of faith let graceless
zealots fight,
He can't be wrong whose life is
in the right."

May the True Religious Associ-

ation from a potent instrument
in the overthrow of bigotry and
superstition, and the furtherance
of civil and religious liberty.'

Yours for "light, more light"

Wm. Lloyd Garrison.

Rev. William J. Potter.

(Private. — You may use this
ad. lib.)

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